

Patience, Planning, and Hard Work

By Tilda Mims, Information Specialist, Alabama Forestry Commission

When growing up on a Tennessee farm, Glenn Whiteside knew he wanted a place of his own one day. Working as an agricultural sales representative for a chemical company fostered that interest, as he observed Alabama farmers using the latest technology to convert land into productive, working farms.

He looked around for more than a year before discovering an old cotton farm in Lawrence County. The farm had about 95 acres in marginal cotton land and the rest was a tangle of cutover and sweetgum. A few whitetail deer and quail used the property, but resident wildlife was scarce. When Glenn looked at the property, however, he saw potential.

Before discussing price with the owner, he walked almost

every acre with Billy Frost of the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He later met with Alabama Forestry Commission and Farm Services Agency representatives to discuss the land's opportunity for wildlife habitat and cost-share assistance. In January 2001, he purchased the 263-acre farm near the Flatrock community.

Less than four years later, the air is alive with a wonderful variety of songbirds and soft mud is speckled with animal prints. An old logging road cleared

smooth enough for a stroll opened up the canopy, prompting a colorful display of native wildflowers including larkspur, St. John's wart, and Indian pink. Thinning nearby pine plantations encouraged greater growth of forbs in those areas while providing food, nesting, and brood rearing habitat for quail.

before planting. Genetically modified soybean and corn allow herbicide to be sprayed right over the tops of the plants, killing only undesirable vegetation.

This summer's big project was developing a 150-yard levee to impound water for waterfowl. Before planning the levee, Glenn contacted the local NRCS for

technical guidance on pertinent federal and state laws. The two-acre moist area will be planted in millet and soybeans. A water control structure in the levee will allow water to be released at a desired time, rate, and duration. Prescribed burning, disking, or mowing every two to three years will set back plant succession and increase desirable seed-producing plants in the area.

This farm is Glenn's hobby and he does all of the work himself. He shares it with family and friends, and particularly enjoys hosting youth hunts and having church friends visit. His goal is a simple one – wildlife habitat enhancement. "My goal is not to have a showplace; my purpose is to enjoy wildlife," he says.

While it may not be a showplace – yet – Glenn's enthusiasm and vision for the farm make it easy to believe his planning, hard work, and patience will continue to craft a haven for wildlife. ♣



Photo by Tilda Mims

TREASURE Forest landowner Glenn Whiteside looked to Alabama Forestry Commission professionals for guidance with his property. Left to right: Les Fields, Lawrence County Ranger; Whiteside, Bruce Frederick, Lawrence County Ranger; and Johnnie Everitt, Colbert-Lawrence County Manager.

Glenn steadily eliminates undesirable hardwoods using the hack and squirt method. Eleven species of oak, including 100 sawtooth oaks, are planted strategically around wildlife openings and year-round food plots. Fertilizing has greatly improved productivity of existing wildlife foods and mast trees.

No-till planting is used throughout the farm except in areas for turkey to dust. Glenn finds it easier, less expensive, and reduces erosion. A pre-treatment of the herbicide *Touchdown* knocks back weeds